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STEVE'S SIDELIGHTS

By STEVE BEVERLY
MATWATCH Editor
WAR BULLETINS

At times, in studying the current state of pro wrestling, I surmise all we need is to revive Edward R. Murrow to report, "This....is London," as the bombs drop around us.

Though not with the full army, Vince McMahon pulled out another arsenal last Tuesday by spiriting Tony Schiavone from the NWA, the second personnel raid in three weeks and first theft from the group's announcing pool since the long-departed Freddie Miller joined the WWF in 1984.

Until the Feb. 4 broadcast of WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, Schiavone had been top announcer on the SuperStation since Jim Crockett's TBS arrival in April 1985. Schiavone, a former broadcaster for the Charlotte minor league baseball team, had just been shifted to lead host of WORLD WIDE and NWA PRO WRESTLING in syndication and was continuing as emcee of studio wraparounds of NWA MAIN EVENT.

MATWATCH has been told Schiavone was offered a \$20,000 pay hike to go with Titan. His role---at deadline---had not been determined. MATWATCH has also confirmed no conflicts existed between Schiavone and his successor as #1 host on TBS, Jim Ross. Both announcers are said to be good friends and were roommates on the road. However, Schiavone, father of five, was said to be unhappy with the shift exclusively to syndication, which has some TBS insiders puzzled.

"This was not a demotion at all," one TBS source told us. "Syndication reaches more people than our shows and no one was unhappy with Tony." Schiavone had received high marks for his "Jim McKay role" as overall host of CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS and pay-per-view shows. TBS officials felt they had two of the best announcers in the field and, in their view, the splitting of Ross & Schiavone would spread their strengths throughout the six weekly TV hours.

The strategy is classic McMahon. On the surface, the Schiavone switch appears minor. But it comes on the eve of the next CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS (which may be history as you read this) and less than two weeks before CHI-TOWN RUMBLE. Plus, the NWA has syndie tapings this week for the weekends of Feb. 25 and March 4. The situation forces Jim Herd and Jack Petrik to work on an unforeseen problem while still reorganizing the NWA. It also comes on the heels of the defection of J.J. Dillon, whose key Titan job is to raid talent. You need not be a genius to figure the next move. McMahon will try to make a major move on the TBS talent coffers. It's contract time for many players and TBS has to be prepared for a battle. Word is filtering that Ted Turner personally is getting more interested in the operation and legend has it that action usually follows.

A number of fans and readers are going to be quick to interpret these latest departures as evidence that a sinking ship is on its descent. I think not....and I will hold to that viewpoint even if more defections follow. Why?

For one thing, as a former television executive, I can tell you that the quick fix---whether it be in news, network scheduling---or even a national pro wrestling show---usually does not work. Quick fixes often get a flurry of attention at the start and then die because the adjustments are not nurtured over a period of time. Go back and look at some of the circa 1984 WWF tapes in your collection and compare to today. Those shows didn't have anywhere near the gloss and production values of the current Titan format.

The NWA product you're seeing on TV and in house shows today is nothing, I predict, like what you'll see eight, ten or twelve months from now.

This viewpoint is not Pollyannaish by any stretch of the word. There are key performers Turner cannot afford to lose and they are well aware of that. As NWA executive vice president Jim Herd told me Monday of last week, "We know we're nowhere near where we want to be. But I assure you, Turner Broadcasting is in the wrestling business for the long haul and when we make decisions, they're going to be careful and deliberate for our future."

McMahon is simply being a smart businessman in predictably attempting to disrupt an organization which in recent weeks has shown signs of coming alive, even while house attendance is sharply down. The Schiavone theft is part of a continuing effort by Coke to keep Pepsi off-guard. But I keep returning to the day Ted Turner bought little WJRD-TV on Peachtree Street in Atlanta to the tune of friends and associates reassuring Turner he would fail with it. It didn't become the top-rated cable satellite service in America the first day Turner took over. Or when his WRET in Charlotte was on the brink of going dark and Turner went on-air and solicited loans from viewers to keep the station going. Those loans were all paid back with interest and the sale of WRET created the capital to finance the start-up of Cable News Network.

No, the war won't end tomorrow despite McMahon's reported admonishments to his staff that Turner "will give up in six months" and "we (Titan) will be offered a slot on the SuperStation." The Schiavone switch is just another shot. Vince will probably have some more victories but I wouldn't be too quick to write the NWA obituary. As Professor Archie Lloyd says, "It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."

Replacements for Tony? The NWA is looking, among others, at Lee Marshall, Jack Reynolds and Charlie Platt. Several readers have asked about Lance Russell, who would be a popular choice, to be sure. But some views have been expressed that Lance may not be as effective in an arena as he is in the WMC-TV studio. Bob Caudle, we're told, cannot clear the time to do extensive work because of his schedule in the office of Sen. Jesse Helms in Raleigh. Ross, in the next week, may have to work a killer schedule that would include tapings in Columbus, Gainesville, Ga., CLASH V, another TBS taping and CHI-TOWN RUMBLE in eight days.

As for the next war bulletin....stay tuned.
SANDS OF IWO JIMA may be next.

CABLE RATINGS RAP (Feb. 4-6)

	Rating	Share
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 2/5)	3.4	7.8
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 2/5)	3.2	5.4
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 2/6)	2.8	3.9
NWA WORLD CH. WREST. (TBS 2/4)	2.5	4.3
NWA CH. WRESTLING (TBS 2/4)	2.3	6.4

(ANALYSIS: All-American is maintaining the steady pace which made it cable's only wrestling show in the top 10 in the fourth quarter of 1988. But the big rise is for the NWA MAIN EVENT, which hit a season high last week with two fresh matches, the Flair-Gilbert clash from NWA PRO and excellent wraparounds by Schiavone and Paul E. Dangerously. WCW, with 11 squashes, was flat but the morning show also hit a season high with no real hot lead-in. PRIME TIME took a full point dip, thanks to heavy network competition from COLUMBO, NBC's Night of 1,000 Laughs and CBS's megahit, LONESOME DOVE.)

**WWF: "IT'S JUST ENTERTAINMENT;"
NEW JERSEY LAWMAKERS HEAR TESTIMONY**

TRENTON, N.J. - Testifying before a New Jersey Senate committee, a World Wrestling Federation spokesman has admitted that pro wrestling "is just entertainment" and that wrestlers are trained to avoid injury.

The hearing, subject of a page one NEW YORK TIMES story last Friday by Peter Kerr, was over a bill proposed to deregulate the wrestling industry in New Jersey. The state Senate passed the bill 37-1.

The WWF has been pressing for deregulation across the U.S. Al Komjathy, an aide to Sen. Francis J. McManimon said, "If this thing were real, there would be broken bones all over the place."

The legislation would eliminate physical exams for wrestlers and licensing of competitors, timekeepers and referees. It would also cut out a New Jersey tax on TV rights.

The TIMES story also featured a look at Larry Sharpe's Monster Factory, where Sharpe trains upcoming grapplers. Sharpe would not corroborate the WWF testimony.

Ironically, John Samerjan, an aide to Gov. Thomas Kean, who has not taken a position on the bill, said, "I can't believe that they had nothing better to do than bodyslam the fantasies of my childhood. I am shocked and amazed."

**LARRY ZBYSZKO WINS AWA BELT;
LAWLER ANSWERS CHARGES MADE ON ESPN**

ST. PAUL, MN - Larry Zbyszko, as expected, captured the AWA heavyweight championship Tuesday night here before 3,400 (750 paid). The title had been stripped from Jerry Lawler for alleged failure to show for a series of bookings.

Zbyszko eliminated Tom Zenk in a battle royal to win the title. Prominent no-shows for the event included Dusty Rhodes, Tommy Rich, The Iron Sheik and Don Muraco. Rhodes cited business details in Florida as his reason.

But Lawler, the target of pointed comments on the AWA/ESPN show of Feb. 3, answered the charges on last Saturday's CWA syndicated show and took AWA chief Verne Gagne to task. "Verne Gagne is an old and senile man," said Lawler. "Verne, you were an okay guy once but you ought to wake up and realize it's not the 1950s."

Lawler said Jarrett Promotions' agreement with Gagne was that Lawler would defend a unified AWA/World Class belt which "The King" won Dec. 12. But Lawler charges that Gagne booked the champion on shows in Minot, ND, and Oshkosh WI, when "Verne knew I had bookings to defend the unified belt in other towns."

The previous week on ESPN, announcer Lee Marshall called Lawler "a disgrace" and said, "I just wish you had stayed long enough for (Zbyszko) to kick your tail."

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES**JOSE GONZALES ACQUITTED;
EXPECTED TO RETURN TO RING SOON**

SAN JUAN, P.R. - In a 9-3 jury vote, Jose Gonzales (Invader III) has been acquitted of murder charges in the stabbing death of Bruiser Brody last June. The ruling was handed down Feb. 6.

Several San Juan papers report Gonzales' colleagues testified in his behalf and portrayed Brody as under the influence of drugs at the time of his death. Testimony suggested Gonzales acted in self-defense.

Prosecutors did not call Mark & Chris Youngblood, said to be in the vicinity of where Brody was killed, or American wrestler Tony Atlas, who was said to have witnessed the stabbing. Atlas reportedly refused to return for the trial.

Gonzales told reporters he intends to return to the Puerto Rican ring soon.

**"MAIN EVENT" DRAWS 11.6 RATING;
DIPS SHARPLY IN MAJOR MARKETS OVER '88**

The WWF MAIN EVENT special on NBC Feb. 3 drew an 11.6 rating and 19 per cent share of audience, down sharply from the 15.2/25 for the 1988 Hulk Hogan-Andre the Giant topliner.

The show was seen in an estimated 10.36 million homes by 24 million viewers, the second most-watched U.S. wrestling show ever, but well down from the 33 million people who saw last year's special.

In Nielsen's 17 metered markets, MAIN EVENT did not win its time period in any, drawing highest numbers in Detroit (15.2/24) and Philadelphia and finishing fourth in the Chicago, Los Angeles and Seattle (7.2/9) markets.

The show finished in a tie with the debut of NBC's UNSUB for 48th in the weekly rankings, losing out heavily to ABC's PERFECT STRANGERS (16.7/27) and FULL HOUSE (17.0/28) and barely nudging CBS' BEAUTY & THE BEAST (11.3/17).

COMINGS & GOINGS

PIPER'S DELAY: Roddy Piper's pilot for a PIPER'S PIT talk/entertainment series has been postponed at least until March 26 by FNN/SCORE. Sources tell us Verne Gagne, through PIT co-host Lee Marshall, is trying to get control of the show as an AWA house organ, something FNN opposes.

CWF TOURNEY: Wendell Cooley won the CWF "mink coat" tourney Feb. 5 in Montgomery, beating Tom Prichard in the finals. CWA stars Jeff Jarrett & Bill Dundee didn't show.

MORE PIPER: THE WRESTLING OBSERVER is reporting Roddy will likely return to the ring soon and ARENA REPORT states Roddy has "named his price" to the NWA. I

COMINGS & GOINGS (Continued from P. 2)

just saw the recent segments Piper has done for Don Owen and the transformation of Art Barr into Beetlejuice simply reminds one how quickly Piper can take charge of a show. It was vintage stuff.

PACT TALKS: The NWA has also offered new contracts to Paul E. Dangerously, Steve Williams, Mike Rotundo and Rick Steiner, among others. But contrary to our info of last week, Eddie Gilbert has not actually signed his new deal.

KNOCK, KNOCK: If our info is correct, the WWF is knocking at the door of at least eight established NWA stars, at least half of whom the Turner circuit can ill afford to lose. Vince reportedly wants to make major raids before April 2 (for obvious reasons).

MULLIGAN STEM: Two different stories on the Blackjack Mulligan situation. Some bulletins are reporting that Mulligan walked out as NWA assistant booker after a weird idea was proposed to open the April 2 show. But the other story is Mulligan is dealing with some personal problems and was told by TBS to go home and settle them.

COMING IN: The Samoan Swat Team may already be in the NWA as you read this (I'll know from attending Monday night's TV tapings in Columbus). Danny Spivey is also headed in but two stories are floating concerning Jimmy Garvin: (1) he won't be in until summer and (2) he's been told no by TBS.

CALLING EDDIE: Word has it that David Woods has been calling Eddie Gilbert again of late but Eddie isn't returning the calls. I haven't been able to confirm that from Woods.

MORNING CHANGES: TBS will move its morning wrestling show, amid little fanfare, to 7:05 a.m. Saturdays beginning this week (4:05 a.m. on the West Coast). Program executive Jeff Carr says the move is to make room for an additional movie for TBS and to replace the underperforming GUNSMOKE and BONANZA. Carr calls the early time period a "short-term move."

COORS BUYS: Coors bought a part sponsorship in CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS V but TBS says the specials, which do well in the cable ratings, still are a hard sell to many advertisers unwilling to sponsor wrestling.

WWF UPGRADES: Isn't it more than coincidental that Vince is running more non-squash matches on Saturdays? We had Sam Houston-Honky Tonk and Bushwackers-Bolsheviks on SUPERSTARS last week--neither world-beaters but better than Ted DiBiase vs. Joe Marto.

RATINGS RAP: WWF pulled a 10.5 on 248 stations for the weekend ending Jan. 15 and for the weekend ending Jan. 22, a 9.6 on 238 stations.

BRUH-THUH: Diamond Dallas Page is in a race with Billy Graham to see how many times he can say "bruh-thuh" on a telecast. As Gordon Solie's color man on FCM, Page hits the word in every other sentence. A side note: a credit on the Florida show now lists Production Assistance by V. R. RUNNELS ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

NONE ON CNBC: NBC's new cable venture, Consumer News Business Channel, which had planned sports on nights and weekends, including some wrestling, now will not carry sports and is canceling the contract for its planned boxing show.

OPEN DOOR?: Reliable sources tell MATWATCH a leading wrestling group has contacted TBS about "opening a dialogue" with the NWA. No word on the response.

TWO, TWO, TWO: From SCW, a young wrestler was asked to do a job on a TV taping for Mr. Atlanta and David Jones. He refused, which would have forced a job on his partner for the fourth straight week. Mr. Wrestling II (Johnny Walker) gave the kid a piece of his mind and told him, "It's all a WORK! Everybody helps everybody in this business." To emphasize, II & Ranger Ross subbed in the match and II did the job, albeit a screw-job. But a veteran observer told us, "I was never more impressed with Wrestling II than when he taught that kid a lesson."

(Continued on Page 6)

CHI-TOWN RUMBLE:
WILL THE MAGIC BE THERE?

Have you ever had the feeling of something that's almost where you want it but not just quite right? I can't help but have the same emotion about CHI-TOWN RUMBLE Monday night in Chicago.

Forget the fact that ticket sales are lagging far behind those of the WWF's weekend show at Rosemont Horizon. In fact, throw out the fact that Jim Ross will probably be completing his 17th hour of commentary in ten days by the time CHI-TOWN is finished, an almost inhuman schedule.

A lot of insiders believe the Ric Flair-Ricky Steamboat matchup has not caught the fire the NWA had hoped. Perhaps they are right. You certainly don't hear the street talk about this one like you do about anything the WWF is doing and I have to remind people who the main event will feature.

By all indicators, signs point to a Steamboat victory Monday night and that would be the ideal scenario to set up the April 2 live show and May 7 NWA pay cablecast from Nashville. But don't count on that. I honestly don't know the precise ending and I wouldn't reveal it if I did. But I get the idea NWA officials are concerned Steamboat won't work enough shows to make him an adequate defending champion.

CHI-TOWN (Continued from Page 3)

The Midnights-Midnights situation will literally come to an end as Paul E. Dangerously is already booked to manage the Samoan Swat Team. The Sting-Butch Reed match I continue to scratch my head at. Sting needs a big, big victory on one of these shows and he's stuck in an opener that he can't win without killing Reed. I've already stated my belief that Eddie Gilbert should have had the U.S. title match vs. Barry Windham. Never mind Lex Luger's outstanding effort at STARRCADE. Perhaps we'll see some reasons for it Monday night.

Predictions? I expect at least one and possibly two titles to change hands and I think Flair and Steamboat will give us the match we anticipate---of top-calibre quality. Plus, TBS did a fine job Saturday of selling this show and did a much better job of plugging it on the syndie offerings. But is it too late? As we are all well aware, pay-cable shows are usually late buys and how well the CLASH V and weekend shows build it (the a.m. show going to 7:05 does not help) will tell this tale. If TBS can pull a 1.8% buy rate out of this show, I'll call it successful. We've just had too much of a glut of PPV and too little excitement leading up to this one and, unfortunately for the NWA, Hogan-Savage is a far more prevalent street talk topic than Flair-Steamboat. We'll be watching Monday.

I REMEMBER: Ed Capral (First of 3 Parts)

Were it not for a conscientious move on the part of a veteran broadcast announcer, Ed Capral---not Gordon Solie---would probably be the name remembered for the glory years of NWA wrestling on WTBS. A business war, on a smaller but similar scale to the one now being waged between Ted Turner and Vince McMahon, created a major split in Georgia promotions in December 1972. Ed Capral joined the side which didn't last.

Capral actually did his first wrestling show in Atlanta in 1953, shortly after graduating from the University of Georgia. He was a color man, live commercial announcer and catch-all for LIVE ATLANTA WRESTLING on Atlanta's WLWA.

In one of those wacky stories which only happens in broadcasting, the regular host went on a week's vacation and told Ed to plan on substituting for him the next week. The emcee never came back from that vacation and Capral began a weekly visit with Atlanta wrestling fans which lasted for 21 years.

"I always treated it like a conventional sports broadcast and I think that's why I was able to last as long as I did," Capral told me last spring. "People related to that and we took the approach to calling wrestling as if the match was the same as the biggest game in the NFL."

Capral had (and still does have in the voiceovers he does for his own ad agency in Panama City, Fla.) one of the purest voices in the game. He gave viewers the impression that he genuinely cared about who won and lost the matches, in much the same fashion as Art

Fleming used to show sincere interest in the contestants' fortunes on the original JEOPARDY!

I first met Ed personally in 1966 when I was camping in Atlanta with MATWATCHER OF THE YEAR Don Gibson and his family. The personable Capral made his visitors from Waycross feel at home and gave us precise directions back to our campsite at Stone Mountain.

When I interviewed him for graduate research last year, Capral reminisced about his favorites over the years. "No doubt Lou Thesz was the greatest wrestler I ever saw," said Capral. "But I'd have to say Nick Bockwinkel was probably the greatest man I ever worked with. Ric Flair was and is the greatest showman and without question, Freddie Blassie was the greatest communicator."

If Solie was the Walter Cronkite of wrestling, Capral was the David Brinkley. Straightforward as a tee, Capral knew the sport inside and out and when he told you something, you believed it. He introduced me over the years to the Torres Brothers, the Vachon Brothers, Gene & Lars Anderson, Mario Galento, Buddy Fuller & Ray Gunkel, the Assassins, Bockwinkel, Paul DeMarco and Buddy Colt.

In 1972, after Gunkel's death, a business dispute between Gunkel's widow, Ann, and his NWA promoter, Paul Jones, led to a split. For two years, Gunkel Enterprises challenged the NWA with All-South Wrestling until a merger was forced in November 1974.

"I was close to Ann during that time and I made the decision to stay with her operation," said Capral, who at the time had no idea of the coming explosion of Ted Turner's SuperStation. But he holds one note of distinction for the Turner operation. "When our wrestling moved from Channel 11 to WTCS in 1972, we became the first program ever to hit 100,000 homes on Ted's station."

Capral is content in his small advertising agency now, calling the wrestling game "a young man's business." Would he ever come back? "Oh, maybe if someone called up and said my guy is sick and we're in a tight, I might come back for a week or two," Capral told me. Well, you see, there's this opening with the NWA and if somebody at TBS would pick up the phone....

(In Parts 2 & 3, the two greatest TV matches I remember with Ed Capral at the mike.)

TV TEMPO (Week of Feb. 6-12)

SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent POWERSLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB - Poor PLUS - Midscale rating.

(FLORIDA) - REPLAYS: Terminator/Jimmy Ace d. Nasty Boys for Fla. tag titles; Steve Keirn-Steelman angle. LIVE: Nasty Boys/Scott Hall d. Jim Backlund/Star Riders; Al Perez d. Nasty Ned; FLA. TITLE: Mike Graham d. El Tigre to retain belt; Dick Slater/Steelman d. Lou Perez/Cliff Sheats; Brett Sawyer d. El Diablo. ANGLE: Al Perez pearlharbors Graham with title belt and Mike juices. Major brawl ensues with pullapart. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(CWF) - Terry Gordy d. Pat Rose; Danny Davis/Doug Furnas d. The Count/The Machine; The Hunters d. Bucky Siegler/Brad Anderson; Austin Idol d. Tim Dawson; The Dog d. Alan Martin; Wendell Cooley d. The Executioner; Johnny & Davey Rich DQ over Mesa Chono/Mike Davis when Jerry Stubbs/Tony Anthony attack. RESTHOLD.

(NWA/TBS) - [A. M.]: Road Warriors/Paul Ellering DQ over Varsity Club in wild match when Hawk thrown over the top. Warriors tear up studio after V. C. goes for Animal's arm; NWA TV TITLE: Rick Steiner d. David Heath; REPLAY: Steamboat workout and brawl with Ric Flair afterward. Flair goes berserk after replay is shown. Squash winners: Sting, Barry Windham, Michael Hayes/JYD. DRAW-PLUS...the Flair bit (not a dog's worm pill) was vintage Ric.

[WCW]: REPLAY, Warriors/Ellering vs. VC; Midnight Express d. Cruel Connection; Butch Reed d. Trent Knight; NWA TV TITLE: Steiner d. Pretty Boy Lloyd; Hayes/Dick Murdoch d. Ric Allen/Mike Thor. RESTHOLD.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: M Ex d. Cruel Connection; PROFILE: Ricky Steamboat & family; Hayes/JYD/Ron Simmons d. Trent Knight/Bob Emery/Bob Cook; Other winners: Sting, Sullivan/Williams, Kendall Windham. RESTHOLD.

[WORLD WIDE]: Steiner d. Cook; Road Warriors d. Mike Thor/Dave Heath; Original M Ex d. Terminators; Other winners: Rotunda, Lex Luger, Barry Windham. REPLAY: Steamboat pins Flair on WCW. BOMB-PLUS.

(AWA) - Top Guns d. Steve Butler/Pete Sanchez; Col. DeBeers d. Steve Ellis; Tommy Jammer d. Tony Leone; CLASSIC: Greg Gagne/Jim Brunzell DQ over Jerry Blackwell/Ken Patera; Brad Rheingans d. Chris Curtis; AWA TAG TITLE: Mando & Hector Guererro d. Badd Co. when Pat Tanaka accidentally hits Paul Diamond with Knucks but decision reversed when ref Marty Miller finds Knucks planted in Mando's trunks. RESTHOLD.

(PORTLAND) - Southern Rockers double DQ w. Buddy Rose/Grappler; Beetlejuice d. Joey Jackson; Steve Doll DQ over DeBeers; Carl Stiles d. Mike Golden. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(PCCW) - Ole Olson d. Buddy Wayne; Billy Two Eagles d. Tama Samoa. BOMB-PLUS.

(ATLANTIC COAST) - Larry Stephens d. Ricky Nelson; Joel & Hoss Deaton d. David Isley/Todd Champion; Rock & Roll Express win squash; Doug Sommers d. Tommy Angel; Mitch Snow/Scott Armstrong d. John Savage/George South. RESTHOLD.

(WMC) - Miguel Perez/Hurricane Castillo d. Sasaki Sam/Mr. Pogo; Dr. Death d. Sabu; WMC TV TITLE: Jason the Terrible d. Carlos Colon for belt; LOSER LEAVE TOWN: Rufus R. Jones d. Bobby Jaggers. POWERSLAM.

(CWA) - Bill Dundee/Adrian Street d. Yates & Elder;

Samurai/Shogun/Phil Hickerson d. Nolan/Napier/Johnson; Ricky Morton d. Brian Lee; Jerry Lawler d. Keith Eric; CWA TITLE: Dutch Mantel retains by DQ over Jeff Jarrett; Jimmy Golden/Frankie Lancaster d. Tracy Smothers/Scott Steiner; ANGLES: Lawler claims creation of Rock & Roll gimmick, Morton calls Lawler a liar; Lawler blasts Verne Gagne (see page 2). POWERSLAM-PLUS.

(SCW) - David Jones/Mr. Atlanta d. Mr. Wrestling II/Ranger Ross; Bambi wins DQ over Joyce Grable; Dino Minnelli d. Bob Bennett; Georgia Power d. Lee Scott/The Invader; Tommy Rich/Steve Lawler d. Joel Deaton/John Michaels and Deaton turns on Michaels with figure-4; Ron Starr d. Steve Bennett. DRAW-PLUS.

(PWTW) - SCW, Tommy Rich vs. Terry Gordy double countout; WWF, Royal Rumble recap; Stampede, tag match; CWA, Dundee/Street win squash; CWF, Anthony/Stubbs try to break Davey Rich's arm; INTERVIEW: Boni Blackstone v. Randy Savage. DRAW-PLUS.

(WWF) - [SUPERSTARS]: REPLAY, Hogan & Savage split from MAIN EVENT; Honky Tonk Man d. Sam Houston; Bushwackers d. Bolsheviks when Butch Miller pins Boris Zhukov; John Studd d. Black Knight & Jeff Atkinson in handicap match; Squash winners: Tito Santana, Brutus Beefcake. BRO. LOVE w. Bobby Heenan, Brooklyn Brawler; ANGLE: Ted DiBiase goes into Betteridge Jewelers in Greenwich CT and asks for a \$1 million championship belt to be made for him; INTERVIEW: Savage tells Jesse Ventura he'll "think about" giving Hogan a title shot. POWERSLAM-PLUS...best SUPERSTARS show in a long time. [SPOTLIGHT]: Key first-run match: Ron Bass d. Jim Powers. No rating offered.

[CHALLENGE]: REPLAY: Hogan-Savage split on MAIN EVENT; Rockers d. Danny Davis/Ross Browner; Rougeaus d. Frank Valdez/Ricky Ataki; Other winners: Hercules Hernandez, Curt Hennig, Powers of Pain. RESTHOLD.

(LTR) - Robert (Lyle Alzado) becomes Henry Higgins to Rosie, a female wrestler, whose brown repels men. MATCH: Italian Stallion d. Trent Knight. David Isley also appears. DRAW...a nice story.

(WCCW) - J. J. Funk d. Buster Fowler; Killer Brooks d. Tony Falk; Gary Young/Cactus Jack Manson DQ over Jeff Jarrett/Eric Embry when Embry brings in scissors; Stud Stable d. Brian Lee/Todd Morton; TEXAS DEATH MATCH: Brickhouse Brown vs. Iceman Parsons ends in 8-man brawl. DRAW.

(NWA MAIN EVENT) - From A. M.: Road Warriors/Ellering vs. Varsity Club; Dick Murdoch d. Keith Steinborn; Sting/Michael Hayes d. Ric Flair/Barry Windham when Sting pins Barry. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

LINES OF THE WEEK - 1. Jim Ross, TBS: "It's like lambs coming down out of the herd and wolves coming down out of the mountain to pick out that one lamb." 2. Ross & Paul E., NME: PAUL, "You're worse than David Crockett." JIM, "That's terrible." 3. Ric Flair, TBS: "I don't care if it's Jim Herd, Ted Turner,

Petri...any of them. If I want to run the streets of Atlanta naked, I will." 4. Sean Mooney, WWF: "Butch & Luke--two guys you wouldn't want to recommend to your dentist." 5. Jerry Lawler, CWA: "Verne, you were an okay guy but you ought to wake up and realize it's not the 1950s." 6. Dusty Rhodes, FCW: "My daddy told me to leave the dance with the one you brought you there and Florida brought me to the dance." 7. Jim Cornette, TBS: "Ric Flair looked like he needed to go out the window because the lady's husband came home too early." 8. Ross & Cornette, TBS: ROSS, "An imaginary line diagonally across the ring is being drawn." CORNETTE, "A line of demarcation."

9. Jesse Ventura, WWF: "Baryshnikov, Bolshevik, it's close enough to me." 10. Butch Reed, TBS: "You can't be like cabbage...all head and no behind." 11. Cactus Jack, WCCW: "Hickory Dickory Dock, 3 mice ran up the clock. The clock struck one. The other two got away with minor injuries." 12. Diamond Dallas Page, FCW: "You better watch her (Diamond Doll), Gordon. She seems to be fogging up your glasses." 13. Ross, TBS, to Flair: "I didn't embarrass you. Steamboat did!" 14. Flair, NWA PRO: "That piece on Steamboat and his family would bring a tear to the glass eye of anyone except Ric Flair." 15. Hiro Matsuda, NWA PRO: "I hear wrestling very profitable business." 16. Kendall Windham, NWA PRO: "No more kissyface."

17. Paul E., WWF: "I had a cocker spaniel that was meaner than Steiner." 18. Page, AWA: "Luck is simply when skill becomes opportunity." 19. Vince McMahon, WWF: "You have to be in the top 10 to get a title shot. Jesse, you weren't even in the top 50." 20. Tony Schiavone, WWF: "You (Paul E.) are just like a waterbug floating in and out." 21. Cornette, TBS: "Ellering is a weak link. When you look at his 2 partners, King Kong would be a weak link." 22. Steamboat, WWF: "Ric Flair, I know you like I just read your diary and brother, it's dirty." 23. Cornette, TBS: "Mr. Matsuda is not a Japanese tourist with Coke bottle glasses and a camera around his neck." 24. Ross, TBS: "This may be the stupidest thing I've ever done but I'm gonna try to have a word with these guys (The Road Warriors.)."

GORDON SOLIEISM OF THE WEEK - Jim Ross, TBS: "...the systematic dissection of the human anatomy."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Jerry Lawler, CWA: "Verne Gagne is a senile old man." 2. Jim Cornette, TBS: Butch, you've had trouble with guys who can move. Sting can run circles around you." 3. Hawk, TBS: "Varsity Club, we'd like to kill you but dead men don't feel pain!" 4. Cornette, TBS: "I've got some travel information for the bus station where you like to pick up your boyfriends, Paul E."

DREADED SLITCH AWARD - WORLD WIDE, for upcut on audio of Dangerously at beginning of match commentary.

BEST PICTURES - 1. WORLD WIDE, Steiner coming out to drink fan's coffee. 2. TBS, Road Warriors-Varsity Club brawl. 3. WWF, Butch & Luke's toothless grins.

BEST PRODUCTION - 1. WWF, Edited highlights of Hogan-Savage split. 2. TBS, Ricky Steamboat profile on NWA PRO.

NICKNAME OF THE WEEK - Cornette, TBS, for calling Cruel Connection KERMIT THE FROG I & II.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. The Terminator, FCW: "What's all this Flamingo Madness crap?" 2. Lawler, CWA: "Can you imagine the world champion defending the title in Minot ND?"

DUM QUESTION OF THE WEEK - Gene Okerlund, WWF: "Hulk Hogan, do you feel betrayed?"

BOO AWARDS - 1. TBS, for upcutting the start of WCW 13 minutes because of a U.S. OLYMPIC GOLD runover. I hope this does not become a habit. 2. AWA, for the ending of the tag title match. That finish is becoming as much a cliche as the Dusty ref bump.

COMINGS & GOINGS

(Continued from p. 3)

USA FEB. 20: Here's the WWF counter plan for CHIL-TOWN RUMBLE...the Madison Square Garden show airs live on MSG Cable. The USA show will be three hours of taped matches, after all.

WHAT I MEANT: MATWATCHer David Williamson wants to clarify that in a recent letter when he said Austin Idol was "a zero at the mike," he was not saying that about Idol's ring work.

MORE ESPN: ESPN will tape two of Antonio Inoki's West Coast shows with the Russian wrestlers on board. Apparently, some ESPN execs believe they'll be getting amateur wrestling.

ALL JAPAN IN KC: MATWATCHer Bruce Grummert reports the International Bash '89 in Kansas City with Shohei Baba's men was "wrestling like I haven't seen for a long time." Only 550 turned out to see Jumbo Tsuruta & Yoshiaki Yatsu beat Stan Hansen & Terry Gordy for the PWF tag titles and a 30-minute draw between the Rock & Roll Express and British Bulldogs.

PEDICINO'S PROBLEM: Talk about a dilemma...Joe Pedicino airs CWA and Atlantic Coast wrestling back to back on his WVEU SUPERSTARS in Atlanta. Ricky Morton is a heel in Memphis and still teaming with Robert Gibson as a face in ACW. Joe had been editing out the Morton heel material from the Memphis show but had to concede Saturday night and explain that Morton was dealing with "a different set of problems in Memphis."

THE ANNUAL: We are going ahead, because of interest, and making another run on the 1988 MATWATCH ANNUAL. So, if you want one, the cost for the second run is \$5.50 each. Send checks or money order to STEVE BEVERLY, 213 PINE HILLS AVE., AUBURN AL 36830 and give me at least 14-21 days to get them out. Thanks so much for your interest!

TUBE TALK

Some notable changes in the NWA syndicated shows, now that TBS has taken over production. Higher camera angles--similar to the WWF's--more emphasis on ring intros, better lighting for ring entrances and the feature package on Steamboat (see INSTANT REVIEW)....WWF did a smooth job of tying together the key moments of the Hogan-Savage split and judiciously edited out Hogan's big blooper (which I'm told West Coast viewers didn't see last Friday)....CWF still seems to be drifting. Another relatively weak show with a big portion of the jobbers masked guys and another change in color men (Tom Prichard) for Charlie Platt.

Lots of anger from MATWATCH readers at Lee Marshall's remark directed at Lawler last week. Several insiders reminded me he was following Verne's orders but did he have to be THAT strong?....I'm putting out another call for anyone who could phone me the WWC Memphis results. If someone could, we'd keep the call short, preferably between 1-2 p.m. CST on Saturdays....Two other items: if anyone is interested in CHI-TOWN RUMBLE and can't get it, let me know; and if anyone has the episode of THE HONEYMOONERS called "The \$99,000 Answer" on tape, I'll trade any wrestling video I have for it.

Ricky Santana has replaced Bobby Jaggers as color announcer on WWC but he needs much work....Gordon Solie kept mentioning "The Homecoming" for March 11 on FCW. Not sure what that means....Why couldn't Verne have edited in two or three minutes of the finish of his AWA title battle royal for ESPN? He had three days. Instead, it airs this week....Finally, Paul E.'s teaming with Jim Ross on NWA MAIN EVENT was the best yet. I'm told certain portions had to be redone because the hosts and the control room kept breaking up. The ratings are way up on that show and this may be a big reason why.

INSTANT REVIEW: NWA STEAMBOAT PROFILE

One could easily have mistaken this for ABC's UP CLOSE & PERSONAL profile packages--to a point. At least the in depth look at Ricky Steamboat away from the ring on NWA PRO WRESTLING is a move in the right direction.

We were shown shots of Steamboat at home with his wife and son and Tony Schiavone did a creditable job drawing out Ricky's reasons for going after Ric Flair's NWA world title.

However, as one who has worked as a TV news director and overseen both news and feature packages on a daily basis, let me point out some constructive flaws which TBS needs to correct.

One, I assume this will be a regular aspect of the NWA shows. If so, the pieces need an umbrella title,

such as NWA PROFILE or NWA CLOSEUP with a short music bed and graphic with the subject's stillframe to "frame" the package.

Two, we saw at least nine abrupt jump cuts in the editing. What's a jump cut? We see Ricky playing with his son at the edge of the driveway and then the piece cuts immediately to Ricky holding his son. Whomever shoots and edits these pieces needs to work on having the subject walk out of the picture and then move back in for the succeeding shot.

Third, interviews on a tripod! It wasn't bad but the camera was a bit shaky on the interview portion because it was being shot from the shoulder.

Finally, music throughout the piece. There was none and the sound of the story came off flat and dry. Plus, we heard no natural sound during the shots of Ricky playing with his child. The producers of these pieces should get a reel of ABC's "Up Close" segments or of a LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH & FAMOUS profile and get a feel for how these stories should look and sound.

Don't get me wrong, the idea was great and I encourage it. It's a different direction from the WWF's cartoon and sitcom approach. But the mechanics need improving.

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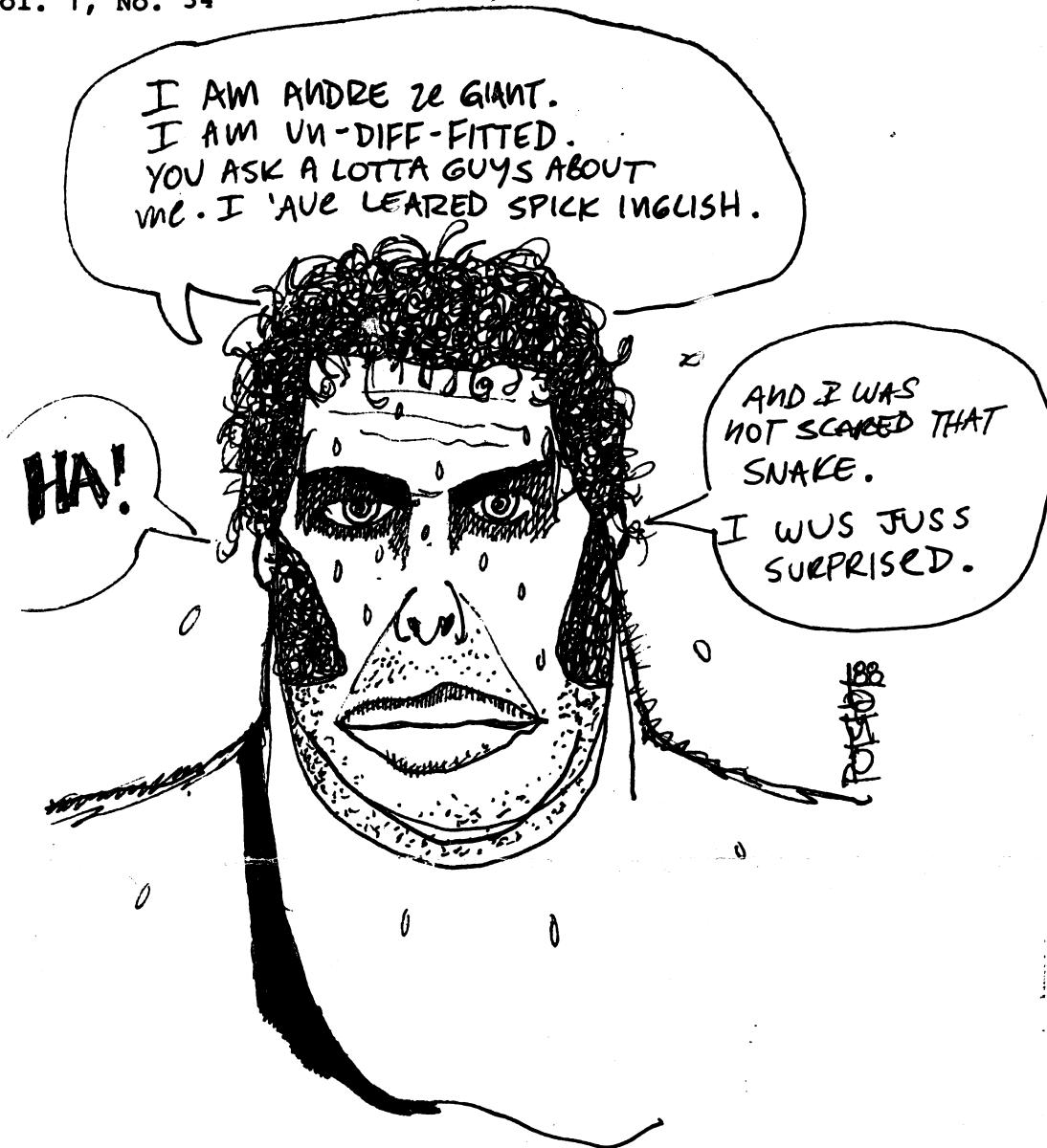
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